News and Views

Prof. Alexander McKenzie, F.R.S.

AT the end of the current session, Prof. Alexander McKenzie will retire from the chair of chemistry in University College, Dundee, which he has occupied with distinction for the past twenty-four years. After graduating in the University of St. Andrews, McKenzie began his chemical research work with Purdie at St. Andrews, and later took his degree of Ph.D. under Marckwald at Berlin. Before succeeding the late Prof. Hugh Marshall in his original university, in 1914, he held appointments as lecturer in chemistry in the University of Birmingham (1902–5) and head of the Chemistry Department at Birkbeck College, London (1905–13). In the University of St. Andrews, McKenzie has achieved a great reputation as a stimulating teacher and director of research, besides rendering valuable services over a long period as a member of Court and Senatus. McKenzie's researches in stereochemistry have earned him a well-merited international recognition as a leading authority in a branch of chemistry which has expanded so remarkably since he carried out his early researches in this field with Marckwald. He has maintained his original interest in the fundamental problems of asymmetric synthesis, and his name will always be associated with elegant work on these problems, as well as on the Walden inversion, and on the migration of organic radicals. His isolation (with Wren in 1908) of optically active benzoin may be cited as a particularly delicate stereochemical achievement, typical of his work in general. McKenzie is also known as a master in the application of the Grignard reagent and a pioneer in the vast field which was opened up by the addition of this invaluable new weapon to the armoury of organic chemistry. He will carry with him on the occasion of his retirement the cordial good wishes of his numerous circle of friends, both in Great Britain and abroad.

Sir Arthur Keith, F.R.S.

To commemorate his term of office as conservator of the Museum of the Royal College of Surgeons of England for twenty-five years, Sir Arthur Keith was presented on February 14 with a bronze bust of himself which had been made by Miss Kathleen Parbury. The bust was purchased by a large number of Sir Arthur Keith's friends and old pupils. Sir Cuthbert Wallace, in making the presentation, referred to the fundamental work of Sir Arthur Keith on the anatomy of the transmitting system of the heart and to his contributions to anthropological science during the past thirty-five years, and, in asking Sir Arthur to accept the bust, expressed the affection which all those who had subscribed, and many others, felt towards him. In his reply, Sir Arthur thanked his friends and old pupils for their generous gift, and asked the President of the College to accept the bust for safe keeping in the College Museum. After the presentation, Sir Arthur delivered a lecture on the prehistoric peoples of Palestine, the substance of which is published elsewhere in this issue.

Planning Scientific Research in Great Britain

To the January number of the *Nineteenth Century and After*, Prof. J. D. Bernal contributes an article entitled "A Policy for Scientific Research for Britain". The article is based on a memorandum on the same subject which was drawn up for the Parliamentary Science Committee by a joint committee of the British Science Guild and the Association of Scientific Workers. This memorandum was the subject of the leading article on research and finance published in NATURE of July 11, 1936. Some modifications have been made in the original memorandum, as the result of criticisms or suggestions by various individuals and scientific associations. Prof. Bernal makes an estimate of what he calls "the present budget of science in England". He arrives at a mean figure of £4,500,000, which represents only one tenth of one per cent of the national income—contrasting very unfavourably with the millions spent on advertising. In the United States the annual expenditure on scientific research is approximately £40,000,000, representing three tenths per cent of the national income or relatively three times as much as the British expenditure. Prof. Bernal puts the expenditure in the Soviet Union as only just under one per cent, and says that in Germany and in Japan it is probable that the proportional sum spent is between three and five times that of Great Britain.

IT is claimed that the present system of financing research in Great Britain does not meet the requirements of the situation and that a bolder and more comprehensive scheme is needed. The proposals of the Parliamentary Science Committee are, briefly, to form a permanent endowment fund for science, so as to ensure simultaneously: (1) adequate finance provided regularly; (2) a suitable rate of increase of income; (3) a comprehensive scheme of research covering all and not only part of the industries of the country; and (4) an organization co-ordinating the work of the different scientific departments and institutes. For these purposes, it is proposed to form a National Scientific Research Fund under the control of a Scientific Research Endowment Board, which would be an autonomous authority of the same type as the Electricity Board or the B.B.C. The Fund is to be provided jointly by the Government and industry, the Government contribution being by means of block grants from the Treasury over a number of years; and the contributions of the